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September 14, 2010

AGU Fall Meeting 2010  
San Francisco, CA, United States  
December 13, 2010 through December 17, 2010

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# Spin Crossover in Ferropericlasite at High Pressure: A Seismically Hidden Transition?

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The characterization of pressure- and temperature-induced transitions of mantle minerals, and their link with seismic discontinuities, is one of the most striking contributions provided by mineral physics for the understanding of Earth's interior. Emblematic in this sense is the series of phase transformations that occur in olivine, which ultimately define the main seismic discontinuities of the upper mantle.

On the contrary, the spin transition in ferropericlasite and perovskite has not yet been clearly related to any seismic signature, even though effects on mantle's density and seismic wave velocity have been anticipated. With specific regard to ferropericlasite, the spin transition occurs without change in the structure, but experimental [1-3] and theoretical studies [4] indicate large softening of all the elastic moduli and consequently significant softening of the aggregate sound velocities. Such an effect should result in a seismic discontinuity or anomaly, albeit broad, depending upon the range of the pressure and temperature over which the spin crossover occurs [5]. However, no seismic anomalies are observed at relevant depth.

Here we present measurements of the complete elastic tensor of (Mg<sub>0.83</sub>Fe<sub>0.17</sub>)O-ferropericlasite up to 70 GPa by inelastic x-ray scattering. From the initial slope of the phonon dispersion of longitudinal and transverse acoustic modes we directly derived the three independent elements of the elastic tensor. While a clear softening of the shear modulus  $C_{44}$  occurs at the spin transition, along with a small anomaly for  $C_{12}$ , we observe no softening for the longitudinal modulus  $C_{11}$ . As a direct consequence of the absence of anomalies in  $C_{11}$ , the derived density dependence of the aggregate compressional and shear sound velocities does not show any significant deviation from the linear trend. This provides a clear explanation for the lack of any one-dimensional seismic signature in the lower mantle directly related to the spin crossover. Conversely, the elastic shear anisotropies of high-spin and low-spin ferropericlasite are profoundly different, and may account for, if not control, the shear wave anisotropy within the lower mantle.

## References

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This work performed under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Energy by Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory under Contract DE-AC52-07NA27344.